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**REMARKS**

Claims 13-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons noted in the official action. The rejected claims are accordingly amended, by the above claim amendments, and the presently pending claims are now believed to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention, thereby overcoming all of the raised § 112, second paragraph, rejections. The entered claim amendments are directed solely at overcoming the raised indefiniteness rejection(s) and are not directed at distinguishing the present invention from the art of record in this case.

Claims 13-15 and 18-24 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Takada et al. '518. The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses the raised anticipatory rejection in view of the following remarks.

As the Examiner is aware in order to properly support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), the cited reference must disclose each and every feature of the presently claimed invention. The Applicant notes that while Takada et al. '518 arguably discloses a variator having a following auxiliary transmission 42, hereinafter called transmission 42, the Takada power transmitting system is exactly the sort of known transmission design as discussed in the Applicant's Background of the Invention at paragraph [006].

By way of further explanation, Takada et al. '518 Fig. 1, discloses a transmission system which necessitates an intermediate counter shaft, including gears 30 and 32 between the transmission output 34 and the differential 36. This is due to the fact that the variator output shaft 64 (i.e., the transmission 42 input shaft) and the transmission output 34 rotate in the same direction. Takada et al. '518 at col. 4 lines 56-64 specifically describes the planetary gears and supporting planetary carrier structure which effect the same direction of rotation to the transmission output 34 as is supplied to the transmission 42 by the variator output shaft 64.

In other words, when using the forward gears according to Takada '518, the direction of rotation of input shaft 64 is the same as the direction of rotation of output gear 34. Therefore, Takada '518 needs the additional countershaft 28 with two gears 30, 32 to be

arranged between the multi-step transmission 42 and the differential gear 36 for transferring the appropriate direction of rotation to the left and right axles 38, 40.

In order to overcome the known drawbacks associated with the above described transmissions, the Applicant's invention causes the input and output shafts 7, 8 of the novel multi-step transmission to rotate in opposite directions for forward gears, and in the same directions for reverse gear. Claim 13 has been amended to more clearly recite this distinction from Takada et al. '518, "wherein in said multi-step transmission (4) said input shaft (7) and said output shaft (8) rotate in opposite directions of rotation using the at least two forward gears. . .". This is an important advantage of the present invention as noted in the Applicant's specification, at page 2, paragraph [011] to "...reduce the formerly double spur gear set. . .to a single spur gear set". Therefore, as at least the above noted feature as specifically recited in claim 13 of the present invention is not disclosed, taught or even suggested by the cited reference, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of claim 13.

Claims 13 and 16-17 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Miyata et al. '160. The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses the raised anticipatory rejection in view of the following remarks.

Similar to the above argument, the Applicant notes that from Fig. 1 of Miyata '160 also discloses an output 42 from the transmission 21 which rotates in the same direction as the input shaft 35 and thus must also utilize the countershaft with gears 43, 44 between the output 42 and the differential 41. Therefore, Miyata '160 does not disclose, teach or suggest at least the feature "wherein in said multi-step transmission (4) said input shaft (7) and said output shaft (8) rotate in opposite directions of rotation using the at least two forward gears. . ." as specifically recited in claim 13.

As claims 14 -24 depend directly or indirectly from claim 13 which is now believed to be allowable in view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant believes these claims to be allowable as well.

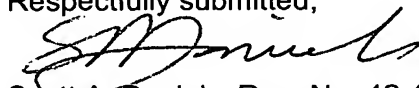
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In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the raised anticipation rejections should be withdrawn at this time. If the Examiner disagrees with the Applicant's view concerning the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection(s) or applicability of the Takada et al '518 or Miyata '160 references, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the specific passage or passages, or the drawing or drawings, which contain the necessary teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure required by case law. As such teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure is not present in the applied references, the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. Alternatively, if the Examiner is relying on his/her expertise in this field, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter an affidavit substantiating the Examiner's position so that suitable contradictory evidence can be entered in this case by the Applicant.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



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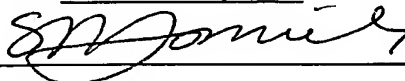
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